SUPPRESSION OF THE NEWS

The leaders of the Mormon Church have always found it very hard to accept criticism. In 1844 a newspaper was established in Nauvoo, Illinois, entitled the *Nauvoo Expositor*. This paper was opposed to Joseph Smith practicing polygamy and running for the office of President of the United States. After the *Nauvoo Expositor* had published its first number, the City Council met. At this meeting Phineas Richards stated that he “was for making a short work” of the *Nauvoo Expositor*. Joseph Smith, who was the mayor, ordered the press destroyed. In the *History of the Church*, vol. 6, page 432, this statement is attributed to Joseph Smith:

“The Council passed an ordinance declaring the *Nauvoo Expositor* a nuisance, and also issued an order to me to abate the said nuisance. I immediately ordered the Marshal to destroy it without delay…”

About 8 p.m., the Marshal returned and reported that he had removed the press, type, printed paper, and fixtures into the street, and destroyed them.

Vilate Kimball, wife of Heber C Kimball, described the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* as follows:

June 11th. Nauvoo was a scene of excitement last night. Some hundreds of the brethren turned out and burned the press of the opposite party. (Letter written by Vilate Kimball, published in the *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, page 350)

In Utah, on October 7, 1868, George Q. Cannon, who became a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church stated:

Yet we, for years have had in our city [Salt Lake City] a paper which publishes, if possible, more abominable lies about us and our people than were published by the “Nauvoo Expositor,” for the abatement of which Hyrum Smith said he was willing to die. We have not noticed it; we have suffered it to go on undisturbed. But the times has come for us to take this matter in to consideration. (Journal of Discourses, vol. 12, page 292)

The Mormon Church had its own newspaper in Utah entitled the *Deseret News*. In 1870, however, a newspaper was established which was later to be known as the *Salt Lake Tribune*. The Mormon historian Joseph Fielding Smith quoted the historian Whitney as stating:

“The *Nauvoo Expositor* was holy writ compared with the *Salt Lake Tribune*.” It had been justly said of this sheet that it was “brought into the world to lie and was true to its mission.” (*Essentials in Church History*, page 548)

The Mormon leaders did not destroy the *Salt Lake Tribune*, however, they were gradually able to make it shift its emphasis from anti-Mormon to pro-Mormon. As one man explained it, the *Salt Lake Tribune* was “baptized” into the Mormon Church. The *Tribune* has now become a tool of the church. An employee of the *Tribune* stated that the suppression of news and the special favors shown to the Mormon Church made him “sick.”

While residents of Salt Lake City have two large daily newspaper (the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Deseret News*) neither one of these papers will report the news if it is unfavorable to the Mormon Church. The following is an example of the way the news is suppressed in Salt Lake City: On December 27, 28 and 29, 1965, the *New York Times* ran a series of three articles on the Mormon Church. Both newspapers in Salt Lake refused to print these articles. The *Deseret News* claimed that it did not print the articles because it was not a member of the Associated Press News Service. The *Salt Lake Tribune* could not offer this excuse since it is a member of the Associated Press. Instead, a man in the editorial department stated that the activities of the Mormon Church were “sufficiently” covered and there was no need to pick up these articles from the *New York Times*. The following are a few excerpts from the *New York Times* articles written by Wallace Turner:

SALT LAKE CITY — The great socio - economic - theo - cratic organization that built this city has entered a period of ferment.

Within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—more commonly known as the Mormon Church—the liberal intellectuals are hungry as never before for avenues of discussion. Some of them will start a magazine soon for a outlet.

For many of these liberals the paramount question is the church’s attitude on Negroes, who are permitted to become members but cannot attain to the priesthood open to all other male members or become church officers.

At the other end of the doctrinal spectrum, some conservatives are causing concern by taking to polygamy—a practice officially discarded by the church 75 years ago—for which they are excomunicated. . . .

The problem of polygamy—for half a century a cardinal principle of Mormonism—has taken a number of members out of the church. One expert estimates that as many as 30,000 men, women and children live in families in which polygamy is practiced.

COLONY IN ARIZONA

Many live in and near Salt Lake City. Hundreds are concentrated in an isolated Arizona town, Colorado City. Others are scattered through the mountain West and in Mexico. . . .

Only by excommunication can a person leave the church. This may be had for the asking, but few ask, even when disenchanted with their religion.

Two who did request it are Jerald Tanner and his wife, Sandra, who run a small printing operation here that distributes such things as anti-Mormon books that have been out of print and pamphlets attacking the validity of the “Book of Mormon” as a divinely revealed work.

Mrs. Tanner is a great-granddaughter of Brigham Young she was holding a great-grandchild of the Mormon leader on her knee as she said:

“Even when I had decided in my mind that I did not believe the ‘Book of Mormon’ any longer, it was months before I could say it aloud.” (*New York Times*, December 27, 1965, pages 1, 18)

In a second article Wallace Turner stated:

SALT LAKE CITY—If George Romney runs for the Presidency of the United States his candidacy will produce button-popping pride among his coreligionists in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the Mormons.

It would also focus attention on the church’s theologically oriented prejudice against Negroes—among whom there are about six million voters.

Since a Negro cannot become a priest, he cannot, in the Mormon view, be one of the elite in the after-life. And he cannot hold any position in the L.D.S. Church beyond simple membership. He is figuratively relegated to the back pew.

NEW BOOKS

REED PECK MANUSCRIPT. This manuscript was written by Reed Peck in 1839. It will be of great interest to all students of Mormon history because of the important information it contains concerning the Mormon war in Missouri and the Danite Band. See page two for a description of this book. This book will sell for $2.00 a copy in the bookstores. Our special price during the 10% sale is $1.80. The quantity prices are: 2 for $3.15 — 5 for $6.30 — 10 for $10.80.

ORSON SPENCER’S LETTERS. Photo-reprint of the 1891 edition, a Mormon publication. This is a very limited printing (only 140 copies). See a description on page two. This book will sell for $3.00 in the bookstores. Our special price during this 10% sale is $2.70. The quantity prices are: 2 for $4.50 — 5 for $9.00 — 10 for $16.20.
**REED PECK MANUSCRIPT**

While browsing through the books at James Wardle’s extensive library on Mormonism, we came across a book with the title, *The Reed Peck Manuscript*. Upon examination we found that it contained photocopies of a handwritten document written in 1839 by Reed Peck. We found this document to be extremely interesting because of the information it contained concerning the Mormon war in Missouri and the Danite band.

After reading this manuscript, we felt that it should be made available to the general public. Upon further investigation we found that Lu B. Cake had printed the entire manuscript in 1899, and that it was in the public domain.

We have now printed this entire document following the original manuscript faithfully with regard to spelling and punctuation.

On page 9 and 10 (of our printing) Reed Peck made this statement:

> Some time previous to this secret meetings had been held . . . ignorant of the nature of these meetings I attended one about the last of June and heard a full disclosure of its object—Jared Carter Geo W. Robinson and Sampson Avard, under the instruction of the presidency, had formed a secret military society, called the “daughter of Zion” and were holding meetings to initiate members. The principles taught by Sampson Avard as spokesman were that “As the Lord had raised up a prophet in these last days like unto Moses it shall be the duty of this band to obey him in all things, and whatever he requires you shall perform being ready to give up life and property for the advancement of the cause. When any thing is to be performed no member shall have the privilege of judging whether it would be right or wrong but shall engage in its accomplishment and trust God for the result.”

It is not our business or place to know what is required by God, but he will inform us by means of the prophet and we must perform. If any one of you see a member of the band in difficulty in the surrounding country contending for instance with an enemy, you shall extricate him even if in the wrong if you have to do with his adversary as Moses did with the Egyptian put him under the sand and both pack off to Far West and we will take care of the matter ourselves. No person shall be suffered to speak evil or disrespectfully of the presidency. The secret signs and purposes of the society are not to be revealed on pain of death. . . . The blood of my best friend must flow by my own hands if I would be a faithful Danite should the prophet command it Said A McRae in my hearing “If Joseph should tell me to kill Vanburen in his presidential chair I would immediately start and do my best to assassinate him let the consequences be as they would . . .”

On page 13 of the *Reed Peck Manuscript* we find the following concerning John Corrill’s failure to obey a revelation:

> John Corrill observed to a person in Far West that he did not “think it his duty to unite with the firm and that he had no confidence in the revelation that required it” Joseph Smith and S Rigdon learning that he had made this observation, chid him severely for his rebellion in the presence of several persons Smith said to him “if you tell about the streets again that you do not believe this or that revelation I will walk on your neck sir” at the same time smiting his fists to evince his great rage He talked of dissenters and cited us to the case of Judas, saying that Peter Peter in a conversation a few days ago that himself hung Judas for betraying Christ He also said “if you do not act differently and show yourself approved you shall never be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven—I will stand at the entrance and oppose you myself and will keep you out if I have to take a fisty cuff in doing it” . . .

B. H. Roberts, the Mormon Historian, admitted that Sidney Rigdon (who was a member of the First Presidency) preached a sermon in which he inferred that the “dissenting brethren” should be “trodden under the foot of men.” Reed Peck made this statement concerning this sermon:

> . . . S. Rigdon took his text from the fifth chapter of Matthew “Ye are the salt of the Earth but if the salt have lost his savour wherewith shall it be salted, it is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and be trodden under foot of men” From this scripture he undertook to prove that when men embrace the gospel and afterwards lose their faith it is the duty of the Saints to trample them under their feet He informed the people that they had a set of men among them that had dissented from the church and were doing all in their power to destroy the presidency laying plans to take their lives & c., accused them of counterfeiting lying cheating and numerous other crimes and called on the people to rise en masse and rid the county of such a nuisance He said it is the duty of this people to trample them into the earth and if the county cannot be freed from them any other way I will assist to trample them down or to erect a gallows on the square of Far West and hang them up as they did the gamblers at Vicksburgh and it would be an act at which the angels would smile with approbation Joseph Smith in a short speech sanctioned what had been said by Rigdon, though said he I don’t want the brethren to act unlawfully but will tell them one thing Judas was a traitor and instead of hanging himself was hung by Peter, and with this hint the subject was dropped for the day having created a great excitement and prepared the people to execute anything that should be proposed (The Reed Peck Manuscript, pages 6 and 7)

Dr. Hugh Nibley, of the Brigham Young University, claimed that Joseph Smith did not know anything about the Danites. Reed Peck, however, claimed that the First Presidency knew about the Danite Band:

> At a meeting for the organization of the Danites Sampson Avard presented the society to the presidency who blessed them and accepted their services as though they were soon to be employed in executing some great design They also made speeches to the society in which great military glory and conquest were represented as awaiting them, . . . (The Reed Peck Manuscript, page 11)

There are many other interesting incidents that Reed Peck relates in this book. We feel that those who are interested in the subject of Mormonism will have a great interest in this book. This book has a plastic binding. The regular price would be $2.00 a copy if you were to buy this in the bookstores. Our special price during this 10% sale is $1.80. The quantity prices are: 2 for $3.15 — 5 for $6.30 — 10 for $10.80.

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**LETTERS**

**BY**

**ORSON SPENCER**

We have just completed a very limited (only 140 copies) reprint of the *Letters of Orson Spencer*. This is a photomechanical reprint of the 1891 edition. On page 207 of this book Orson Spencer states:

> Do not startle, sir, if I should tell you that monogamy, or the one-wife system, adopted throughout Christendom, is a very defective system. It does not answer the demands of society, and it is altogether inferior to the Patriarchial system of polygamy, as introduced by God himself.

The Mormon leaders now claim that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith when he was fifteen years old. Orson Spencer, however, stated that Joseph was seventeen when the “designs of heaven were first made known to him” (*Letters of Orson Spencer*, pages 25). On page 75 of the same book Orson Spencer states that it was only an “angel” that appeared to Joseph Smith.

This book will be of interest to those who are collecting early Mormon publications. This book has a plastic binding and will sell for $3.00 in the bookstores. Our special price during this 10% sale is $2.70. The quantity prices are: 2 for $4.50 — 5 for $9.00 — 10 for $16.20.

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**Bible Study**

We are now holding a Bible study in our home at 1350 S. West Temple, every Thursday evening at 8:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)*

*But he said, Yea rather; blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. (Luke 11:28)*
We wish to thank all those who placed orders during our 10% sale. One man gave us a gift of $20 which was greatly appreciated and came at a time when it was really needed.

Unfortunately, however, we did not receive the money that we needed to continue this work in an effective manner. For this reason and others we have decided to continue the 10% sale and to sell out all of our books (with the exception of Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?; Joseph Smith's Strange Account of the First Vision and Joseph Smith's Curse Upon the Negro). It is very possible that these books will never be printed again, and this may be your last chance to get them. If we are not able to reprint these books at a later date, some of them will probably become collectors items and be worth a good deal of money. It is very possible that the Mormon Church will try to buy up these books; therefore, we hope that our customers will buy many of them and keep them out of the hands of the Church. We know of one book (which was critical of the Mormon Church) that was considered a failure at the time it was printed. As we understand it, however, the Church bought up many of the copies, and it is now a collectors item and is worth $35 to $50 a copy.

At any rate, a person would probably not go wrong in buying a large supply of Modern Microfilm books at the 10% discount. It would certainly help us to pay off many of our bills.

We are including a special price list which gives the prices with the 10% discount already deducted and also shows how many copies of each item we had left when we took inventory January 1, 1966. Some of the books will probably sell out fast; therefore, it would be wise to place your order immediately!

OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We hope that by selling these books we will be able to pay off our loans, and, if it is possible, to keep our equipment. We hope to spend some time in research and writing, and also to continue the Salt Lake City Messenger. After that the Lord may call us to some other work, or we may even continue Modern Microfilm Co. on a part time basis. Be this as it may, we feel that our work has been very effective. We have received much help and encouragement from members of the Mormon Church.

For instance, a student at the Brigham Young University (the Mormon Church’s University) wrote us a letter in which he stated:

I consider myself obligated to you for not only your books but for the way in which my life and ideas have undergone a radical change for the better. . . .

I can do nothing too overtly to help you until I graduate for lack of funds, fear of some kind of reprisal like disfellowshippment or excommunication which would or might foul up my graduation from BYU. But what I can do I do. I think I have been moderately successful in advertising your work and publications to my friends who are much of the same opinions as myself. If I can do anything else for you please ask. (Letter from a student at the Brigham Young University, dated December 18, 1965)

Several men who have served on missions for the Mormon Church have taken a real interest in our work. One man (who had recently returned from a mission for the Church) claimed that he has completely lost faith in the Mormon Church and is considering entering the ministry in another church. A minister in Idaho wrote us a letter in which he stated:

I ordered your masterful work—Mormonism—Shadow or Reality? and I think that it is the most outstanding book that I have seen. I have already recommended it to others and will continue to do so. (Letter dated December 22, 1965)

We have many people on our mailing list who have written or will be writing books, pamphlets and theses on Mormonism. We feel that it has been a very important part of our work to supply these writers with source material. This material will help them to present a more complete picture of Mormonism to their readers. One man who will be writing on the subject of Mormonism sent us a letter in which he stated:

About a week ago I was asked . . . to teach one class session on Mormonism in the Polemics class. . . . yesterday, when I taught the class, everyone came away very enthusiastic. Among other books and literature which I brought to class, I also brought and promoted your book Mormonism—Shadow or Reality? which in my thinking has become a classic in its field.

Well, I must close. You have, through the literature and letters, created an enthusiasm in me to keep on pursuing the area of Mormonism. (Letter dated January 8, 1966)

INFORMATION THAT MUST BE MADE AVAILABLE

We feel that some of the most important information concerning Mormonism has yet to be printed. For instance, we have access to a microfilm of a handwritten document which was dictated by Joseph Smith which, we feel, will absolutely prove that Mormonism is false. At the present time the only thing that prevents us from publishing this document is the lack of money to buy the paper to print it on. The Mormon leaders have suppressed this document for 130 years, but we feel that it must be made available. Also we have a great deal of information concerning the Book of Mormon, the Temple Ceremony, blood atonement, the Danites, changes in Mormon publications, polygamy, the Book of Abraham, suppression of the records and many other subjects which we would like to make available to the public.

Our ability to make this information available hinges on how well we are able to sell the present material.

A VERY HARD WORK

Many people have told us that they would pray for our work. This is very encouraging to us because we realize that we could not have made it this far without God’s help, and we will need His help if we are to continue.

A man who worked at a publishing company in Salt Lake City told us that his company seldom prints less than 3,000 copies of a book at one time. He also stated that if they printed less than 3,000 the price of the book would go up to $10 a copy, and that they would not even consider printing less than 1,000 copies at a time. At Modern Microfilm Co. we have never printed more than 500 copies of a book at one time.

On one of our latest books (Letters of Orson Spencer) we printed only 140 copies. We have had to reprint our large book on Mormonism at least ten different times. To make small printings like this takes a great deal of time. Most publishers would not even consider printing such small quantities, however, we have been forced to do this because of our lack of capital. For this reason we have had to work long hours. Many nights we have not quit working until 11 or 12 o’clock at night.

Actually, we should have had at least $10,000 to start this work, but we began with almost nothing. We had to borrow 250 of the 300 dollars that we needed for a down payment on a microfilm camera.

When we found that it was possible to make masters to print from a microfilm, we looked at an “offset” printing press. Since the price was almost $2,000, we were rather reluctant to buy it. We decided that if our income tax refund came the next day we would use it for a down payment. The next day the refund arrived in the mail, and this was the beginning of a long uphill battle. But even though the work has been hard and the hours long, we feel that our time has been well invested. One man who lives in California wrote us a letter in which he stated:

This is to compliment you on your outstanding and interesting work and also the excellent Salt Lake City Messenger:

Another man, who lives in Utah, wrote:

Keep up the work. Your efforts are the most inspiring and noble thing I have yet encountered.

Whether Modern Microfilm continues or not, we feel that our time has been well spent.
The ramifications of this doctrine mean that the Negro is denied most of the glories held out to other races by the church. Mormons believe that being married in a Mormon temple assures marriage in the after-life, and that being “sealed” to their families in the temple assures togetherness in Paradise. But Negroes are not admitted to the temple, no matter how faithfully they follow the church’s rules.

This insistence that Negroes are theologically inferior has created an assumption of physical inferiority that runs like hot oil through the Mormon society. There are few Negroes living in any of the traditionally Mormon areas.

There are believed to be no more than about 200 Negroes who are L.D.S. Church members.

Utah has resisted civil rights legislation of various sorts. The L.D.S. Church in the 1965 session of the Utah Legislature managed to have a fair employment practices act amended to exempt a church-operated business.

The Negro question has caused bitter resentments among many members of the L.D.S. Church. It is a fundamental reason given by many for their decision to stop attending church.

However, there are many others who equally oppose the church practice but who stay to continue the fight to force some change. One of these is Dr. Sterling McMurrin, provost of the University of Utah.

Dr. J. D. Williams, professor of political science at the University of Utah, is another who objects to the church’s practice on Negroes. He is a member of a stake council and has been a bishop, the chief officer of an L.D.S. ward.

For some in the community of Mormons, the change is inevitable. But it is generally considered that it will not be made at one stroke but will come gradually.

In the extensive Mormon records there is a statement made in 1879 by Zebede Coltrin, the white Saint who said it was he who appointed Mr. Abel while the Mormons were at Kirtland, Ohio. He said that “while I had my hands upon his head I never had such an unpleasant feeling in my life.”

Although there is ferment for change, many observers believe it probable that the majority of the church’s nearly 2.5 million members today would oppose changing the exclusionary rules on Negroes.

A decade ago Mark E. Petersen, one of the Twelve Apostles of the church, said in a speech at the church’s Brigham Young University, at Provo, Utah:

“Now we are generous with the Negro. We are willing that the Negro have the highest kind of education. I would be willing to let every Negro drive a Cadillac if they could afford it. I would be willing that they have all the advantages they can get out of life in the world.

“But let them enjoy these things among themselves. I think the Lord segregated the Negro, and who is man to change that segregation.”


Interviews with both active and inactive members in Utah and elsewhere, point to three basic reasons that members fall away.

First, many of the intellectuals—educated by the church and its members at great cost, in the belief that “the glory of God is intelligence”—are unable to reconcile their learning with their religion.

Second, members become disenchanted with some aspect of church practice: the current leading cause of this is the barring of Negroes from full participation. Another is the constant round of religious activities that seem to have less importance in modern society than they did in pioneer days.

Third, as it was put by one Mormon wife: “This is a hard religion to live.”

(New York Times, December 29, 1965)

These articles are very lengthy; we regret we cannot reproduce them in their entirety.

In another article—the writer’s name is not given—printed in the December 27, 1965, issue of the New York Times, the following appears:

SALT LAKE CITY—He was a handsome, persuasive man as he sat in the living room of his home on the south edge of town.

He had served more than two years in jail for unlawful cohabitation. Nevertheless, he had taken another wife, in addition to the two he had.

“I just happen to believe all of Mormonism, not just the easy parts,” he said. “If it’s true at all, it’s all true. You can’t just take plural marriage out and still have the rest be true.”

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints officially outlawed polygamy in 1890. Members who practice it today are evicted.

The man shifted in his chair and looked hard into the eyes of his son across the room.

“We believe it was all revealed by God to Joseph Smith, and plural marriage was a part of it as you can see just by reading the book. If they want to leave it out, why don’t they tear it out of the book?”

He referred to Doctrine and Covenants.

Then he quoted Brigham Young, second head of the church, who brought the Mormons to the Utah desert:

“The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy.”

The man who talked in his living room about his strong conviction was reared as a Mormon. His first and only legal marriage was performed in the temple in Salt Lake City about 40 years ago.

His second marriage was to the half-sister of his first wife. His third wife—who listened to the interview and took part in it—asked to live with him, as did his fourth wife.

The first two left after the fourth one moved into the growing household. The fifth was added fairly recently.

All but the first marriage have been in ceremonies away from the church, performed by members of polygamous groups.

These women have borne 29 children. Of these 29, it was calculated that 12 now live in polygamous marriages. The husband and his wives came from polygamous families.

It is entirely possible that more people live in polygamy in Utah today than did between 1852 and 1890, the period when the L.D.S. Church openly advocated it.

But there is one great difference. In those old times, the leaders of the church were virtually all polygamists. Brigham Young had more wives than anyone has been positively able to establish. Generally it is said he had 27, but research indicates he probably had more than 50.

Today, none of the leaders is a polygamist—although almost every one of them is a descendant of polygamists.

The last major attempt to round up polygamists in Utah ended in failure in 1958 when their neighbors refused to testify in a grand jury investigation. Members of the L.D.S. Church have shown a reluctance to participate in prosecutions of persons accused of polygamy.

Although polygamists today are all outside the L.D.S. Church, they draw their scriptural authorizations and their argument in support of the practice from the L.D.S. literature and extensive records.

They are able to quote some of the most revered names in Mormon history in support of plural marriage.

It was common in the late 19th century for Mormon leaders to argue that Jesus was married, and that he was married to several wives.

As the Salt Lake City polygamist indicated, Joseph Smith’s revelation on plural marriage is still printed in Doctrine and Covenants, one of the sacred works of Mormonism. (New York Times, December 28, 1965, page 18)

Although the Mormon leaders may be able to control the newspapers in Salt Lake City and keep them from printing articles such as these, we feel that the time will come when they will have to face these problems. They will not be able to keep their people in the dark forever.